**What insights might you offer regarding approaches in the recruitment, training and deployment of lay leaders in ministry in this current season of the church? Dr. Martin Giese**

\* Although we affirm that all Scripture is given by inspiration of the Spirit of God, there are key passages that speak more directly to Leadership within the Body of Christ. Among the “top tier” passages for Christian leaders and specifically pastors is Eph. 4:1-16. And, of course the definitive statement of vss 11-12. ***11And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...(Eph. 4:11-12 ESV)***

Our task and purpose as leaders couldn’t be clearer. i.e. Leaders are given by God to the Body of Christ – not to do all of the work of the ministry but rather to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

As 21st century leaders we immediately confront a couple of troubling issues:

1. Many churches have a longstanding precedent of hiring a pastor/teacher to do the work of the ministry
2. The matter of contextualizing the equipping process i.e. ***How are we to do that in our context, in our time and place in history.***

Before we can give attention to the matters of recruitment, training and deployment of the saints we need to reestablish an awareness of God’s agenda!

1. **Help your congregation to “rediscover” God’s plan for leadership!**

Preach and teach Eph. 4!

For some congregants the discovery that a church does not hire a pastor to do the work of the ministry, but to equip (train) the “saints” (church members) to do the work of the ministry will be a revolutionary thought and concept!

Ex. In a congregation of 50, a pastor has 1/50th of the responsibility for the work of the ministry, and a vocational responsibility and Divine call to equip the saints!

\* One of the results of neglecting this truth for extended generations is pastoral exhaustion – currently exacerbated in our culture by the lingering impact of Covid (the “Great Resignation”) – people leaving corporate worship and tuning in at home and deep political division.

1. **Separate the concept of “ministry” from “program” in your mind and in your ministry.**

The post-WWII American church often regards those terms as synonyms!

We advertise programs, promote programs, staff programs, maintain programs, lament out inability to operate more programs, celebrate the diversity of our programs, all on the road to programmatic exhaustion. We are an overprogrammed and underequipped church.

So we reestablish a biblical foundation for leadership and the equipping process. Now to the matter of recruiting.

**Recruitment: Selecting the saints for their work of the ministry**

**Become a careful observer of individual sensitivities, interests, and passions and “recruit” people to their passion (not program)** Equip/train them to facilitate greater effectiveness in following God’s “wiring” in their life. Then release them with your blessing to pursue the ministry that they are already motivated to pursue!

It’s much more of an individualized approach than we are accustomed to. We more often launch programs and give group invitations to become involved. But we often run into the problem of maintaining motivation because people are not serving in their area of giftedness and passion!

[\* Discovering commonly shared passions will shape the future of your church’s ministry and ***may*** lead to a more formal structure for executing that passion. Aka “A program.” But that is not the envisioned goal – the goal is individual involvement in effective ministry and individual equipping for effectiveness in those ministries.]

- It is more informal than formal – and as a result it is less familiar to many church members and many pastors!

- It is more individualized than collective.

So, we identify giftedness, recruit to passion. Now training.

**Training: Preparing the saints for the work of the ministry**

- Training may include a cognitive, classroom component. But it must also include one on one contextual experience.

- The training “context” will move progressively away from the campus to the community.

\* John Maxwell’s 5 step process is a useful construct.

1) I do it

2) I do it and you are with me

3) You do it and I am with you.

4) You do it

5) You do it and someone else is with you

\* This will take more time than our more common approaches to training, but the results are transformational and tend to be lasting.

**Deployment:** **Releasing the saints for the work of the ministry**

- Free your people and processes from the tyranny of scheduled meetings!

\* In deploying people to their ministry passion one of my mantras for many years to teams/groups has been *“Meet as often as necessary, but not more than necessary.”* Match meeting frequency to ministry need. (If you don’t need to meet, don’t meet!)

- The average smaller rural church has far more meetings than necessary and, as a result has far less time and energy to pursue ministries that are necessary!

Some ministries will attract more ministers than others. More people typically require more organization and administrative structure. Allow ministry to grow “organically.” Assist your people in interjecting necessary supportive structure. But beware of the tendency to “overgrow” structure with the result that servicing the structure supplants the work of the ministry!

Illustration: I have reread the record of the work of the ministry in the New Testament many times without discovering monthly meetings, the selection of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer, reading of the minutes, detailed treasurer’s reports, quarterly reports, annual reports, bi-annual reports, evaluation sheets, committees, subcommittees, task forces appointed by subcommittees on behalf of committees, etc. ~~

Like you, I saw in the record of the New Testament more prayer, more passion, more individual exhortation and more action related to the work of the ministry.

\* This “reset” is a process with several distinctives.

- It will seem non-traditional to many, it is, in fact more biblically traditional than many of the things we do which we call traditional. Ex. Perhaps the closest thing to a program in the New Testament is the delegation of the food distribution in Acts 6.

- It is highly relational and does require mentor input but does not require a great deal of administrative structure.

- It is time intensive but carries the promise of “leverage” through a “force multiplier” effect. By that I mean that this approach has “self-sustaining” momentum if aided by supplemental equipping/training.

\* Leveraging your leadership impact may require some changes in your leadership approach/style.

- Recognize that you cannot and must not do it all!

- Recognize that you do not have the expertise to do it all!

- Transfer structural authority in the direction of spiritual maturity/ability/expertise. (Illustration: Oversight of nursery was delegated to young mothers. Oversight of building and grounds was delegated to men and women with expertise in the trades! Oversight of campus care was delegated to congregants who were gardeners and landscapers. Etc. etc. etc.

- Utilize teams and periodically serve as a team member.

\* Allow God to shape His vision for your congregation’s future through this equipping process